



Community Health Improvement Process

**2014-2015 Community Health Needs Assessment
Community Conversation with the Vietnamese Community
1301 Piccard Drive, Rockville, MD
October 10, 2015**

Introduction

Healthy Montgomery hosted a community conversation on health and well-being in partnership with the Vietnamese community Saturday, October 10, 2015. The conversation took place from 12:00 – 2:00 pm in Rockville, MD. There were 13 participants. The conversation was facilitated by Cathie Sheffield-Thompson.

The community conversation included a discussion of what is meant by health and well-being at the individual and community levels, elements of a healthy community, community assets and challenges in Montgomery County, and practical steps to improve the health and well-being of the community. Participants engaged in one large group discussion, and were also offered the opportunity to contribute comments and feedback regarding the meeting in writing.

Defining Health and Well-Being

To begin the conversation, the participants described elements of a healthy community and what they do to be in a state of health and well-being. The participants stated that eating well, physical activity, work-related safety, employment, sleep, mental health, healthy interpersonal relationships and support, health insurance, taking preventive measures, knowledge about resources that are available as some of the ways they define health and well being. A healthy Asian community with available Asian doctors was also mentioned.

Assets that Support Health and Well-Being

Community participants identified resources in the community that enabled them to thrive in their healthiest state of wellness.

- Health care services
- Urgent care facilities and hospitals
- More access to health care for low- income families (Obama Care)
- Push to eat healthier and exercise
 - Access to fresh healthy food
 - Availability of Asian markets and ethnic foods
 - Parks and community recreational facilities
 - Sidewalks, walking trails/paths for pedestrian safety
 - Bike trails
 - Shopping mall opening early for walking
 - Free membership to college gym facilities



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- Access and availability of government services
- Availability of fire, police, and emergency medical technicians
- Improved government regulations
- Clean air and water
- Libraries for internet access and help with health education
- Increase in high schools
- Access to educational opportunities, outreach and community events
- Better communication of health information via social media
- Increase in social services (emergency services) for newcomers/immigrant families

Barriers to Health and Well-Being

Participants discussed challenges in their community that make living healthy more difficult.

- Language barriers - particularly translation of health related messages is lacking in the Vietnamese community
- Perception that the government doesn't have consistent commitment to minority groups
- Taxes do not guarantee provision of equitable services
- Culturally, health is not easy to talk about
- Generational and gender differences influence knowledge about health
- Better communications and outreach to mature Vietnamese women who have a major role in family health
- When the Vietnamese community lacks information about health triggers, apathy is at risk
- Low income families lack access to affordable health care
- Lack of comfort (language barrier and trust) with doctors who are not Vietnamese
- High cost of health care
- Dental care is expensive, many lack access, and there is a cap on what is covered
- Organic, healthier food is more expensive
- Traffic congestion from overpopulation and increased development
- Cultural differences reveal different social norms (trash/litter)
- Lack of support and knowledge about nail salon work safety issues must be addressed by culturally sensitive materials in Vietnamese

Practical Steps to Improve Health and Well-Being

Participants made the following recommendations to improve health and well-being. The list provided below is ordered by the priority voting given to each item.

1. Establish an official Vietnamese liaison position to connect the county to the Vietnamese community (16 priority votes)



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2. Promote health and mental health awareness in the community - host clinics or workshops on a regular schedule (11 priority votes)
3. Be culturally sensitive - Translate important breaking news, health documents and information in Vietnamese (8 priority votes)
4. Empower the community by engaging them in dialogue about health, especially outreach to mature Vietnamese women (8 priority votes)
5. Setup a timely feedback system (semi-annually) for the county to receive consistent and up-to-date feedback from the Vietnamese community (7 priority votes)
6. Create a coalition that meets regular to discuss current issues/priorities (3 priority votes)
7. Provide more safe and local bike trails (1 priority vote)
8. Promote work-related safety
9. Provide access to more affordable healthy foods
10. Provide more affordable dental care
11. Employ Vietnamese navigators or volunteers to help with health insurance enrollment

Community Conversation Feedback

Participants were provided an opportunity to give written feedback about the meeting. In a short closeout survey, participants were asked, "Is there anything else that you want us to know, including what you like or did not like about this community conversation?" There was one response provided below.

"I apologize for some of the responses, which may seem inappropriate like political comments."